

life, it is tending with increasing impetus to free itself from the materialism that first began to get a hold on the public as far back as the eighteen-sixties, reached its climax towards the close of the century and since then has been gradually merging into a new phase. That this phase will be one of great spiritual development, I can have no possible doubt. In the Spring of last year, I wrote three articles for the *Daily Express*, dealing with my views on the future of religion, and the enormous response that I received indicated beyond any question the existence of a great body of people of all degrees (I had two letters from one of our prisons), most of them eager for a gospel that shall override their small dissensions of sectarian creeds and the dogmatisms of an outworn theology.

Returning now to current literature, I find the most significant indications of the broad movement I have indicated, less in fiction and the drama than in science. It is, indeed, a rather serious fact that our four most prominent writers at the present day are all materialists, although three of them, at least, are moralists of a high order, and two idealists in the van of social reform. I will take each of them in turn with particular reference to their most recently published work.

Bernard Shaw, who has in my opinion the finest intelligence and the most cultivated gift of expression of any living English writer, has produced a new play recently *The Apple Cart*. Its satire is chiefly directed against political and diplomatic methods, and though approving the point and tendency of that satire, I miss the indications I found in *Back to Methuselah* and *Saint Joan*. In both these plays there was the faint stir of a religious motive though it were but the hint of a brilliant mind handling with a faint new bewilderment the presentations that it had hitherto regarded as the only reality. Whether that mood of wonder will return in his future work it is impossible to say. He is a man of over seventy and unusually clear-sighted as he is, has reached an age that dreads the cataclysm of any radical change of thought.

H. G. Wells' latest production was the scenario for a screen-play *The King who was a King*. The theme is, in effect, that developed in the latter chapters of "The World Set Free"—the movement towards a world-peace and universal understanding. He is a great humanist and all war is, to him, a sacrilege. He is, also, an idealist, looking continually forward into a future in which all social life shall be ordered and orderly, to a reign of universal justice, freedom and brotherly love obtaining among all the peoples of the world. It is a great and worthy ideal and he does much good by preaching it, but he mistakes the means by which such an Utopia may be attained. He is a worshipper of machinery and his mind is obscured by the scientific opinions that distinguished the materialistic climax I spoke of as coming at the end of the nineteenth century. His habit of thought has never tended towards mysticism.

John Galsworthy has published nothing of first importance since he brought his *Forsyte Saga* to a conclusion with "Swan Song,"